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RECOMMENDATION NO. 14

Initiate prompt action to establish a system insuring positive and continuous control and location of all Official Personnel Files.

1. The attached memorandum for Chief, Control Division from Chief, Transactions and Records Branch outlines the initial review made of administrative control of Official Personnel Files.

2. The following is a summary of actions taken:

a. A semi-annual inventory was reinstituted in June 1971. This inventory is more than half complete. Results prove the inventory to be worthwhile and a further precaution for increased file control. Thus far we have been able to conduct the inventory with present staff.

b. Several Departments and Agencies were consulted as to how they handled the control of their Official Personnel Folders. From this, we consider our handling of folders to be superior to that in those organizations and recommend the adoption of only one feature. We believe that all Official Personnel Folders being requested by officials in the Headquarters area should be picked up in person from the File Room. It is estimated that 85 to 90 percent are picked up in this manner at the present time.

c. Discussions have been held and a requirement levied on the SIRS Group for consideration of an on-line computer control of the Official Personnel Folder.

d. Attached are drafts of a Headquarters Notice (Tab A) and an OPM (Tab B) calling attention to [redacted] "Control and Loan of Official Personnel Folders," and emphasizing areas in which difficulties have been encountered in the control of the Official Personnel Folder because of lack of administrative discipline in following the procedures and requirements of that Handbook. The proposed Notice also stipulates that Official Personnel Folders must be picked up in person by Headquarters based personnel and that the Handbook is being changed accordingly.

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3. We believe the sum of these actions will substantially improve the control of Official Personnel Folders. With the approval of the Deputy Director for Support we shall process the attached Headquarters Notice and OPM for publication.

GROUP 1  
Excluded from automatic  
downgrading and  
declassification

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25 June 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Control Division

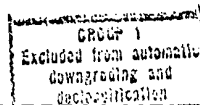
SUBJECT : Administrative Control of Official Personnel Files

1. The Transactions & Records Branch (TRB) has recently reviewed its Official Personnel File (OPF) control procedures with the goal of providing a positive and continuous control of OPF's.

2. An examination shows the problems encountered in the Agency personnel file control system do not revolve around missing files. In the past ten years, perhaps eight cases of this nature occurred which required the creation of duplicate files. In all of these cases, the component acknowledged the receipt of the files, but could not locate the files within its own components. In all of these cases, the OPF's have been recovered eventually within the component originally charged with the file. The problems encountered by TRB are the delays in receiving files back from components or in tracking them through the internal logging procedure as they are forwarded within the components.

3. A first logical step in controlling OPF's is to establish an inventory to make sure that they all can be accounted for. Inventories of this nature were done at one time, but because of work pressures, only one had been done in the last three years. The inventory has been reestablished on a semi-annual basis, with the first one under way now after having been initiated in June of 1971. The procedure used in the inventory is to match the alphabetical listing of the Job 105 machine listing with the OPF's or charge cards showing the location of the files. Without exception, every personnel file that is not on file or has been charged out for more than 30 days is to be located. In addition to locating all OPF's, we hope to develop data on procedural errors that will enable us to take remedial steps. Procedural errors in question would be such things as removal of charge cards, misfiled personnel files and charge cards and correction to name changes.

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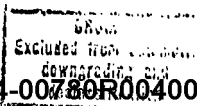


4. As an experimental adjunct to the inventory, an employee suggestion will be adopted in the near future in which each employee in the Files Section will be assigned a section of the alphabet for its review and maintenance. If this ongoing supplemental inventory proves to have substantial merit, it will be continued as a backup to the semi-annual inventory program.

5. As a first step in examining file control procedures TRB surveyed the personnel file control systems used by NSA, AID, USIA and State Department in an attempt to identify any useful procedures for Agency adoption.

- A. AID has a centralized personnel file system but they do not have a list of persons authorized to charge out files. The supervisor of their files section says that he gets to know who they are. They have done away with any need for a receipting system by refusing to send out any files. All files must be picked up in person. Files may be charged out for five days on the basis of a charge card filled out by the individual. Their volume is about 1,250 per week and they do not have any scheduled inventory.
- B. The State Department has a centralized files system. They maintain a current list of individuals authorized to charge out files as well as a list of individuals authorized to carry personnel files as couriers. An authorized individual may have a file for 30 days after filling out a charge request which is filed in the space vacated by the file. The State Department had a receipting system in effect for files that were sent out until about four years ago, when it was abandoned because they could not afford the extensive time and effort to maintain it. They also used to have a periodic inventory as a back up for their charge system, but they have not had one for some time now.
- C. The United States Information Agency does not have a centralized files system. There are separate sections for foreign service and the various domestic media. The foreign service section does maintain a list of individuals authorized to pull personnel files and it is kept current. When an individual wants a file, a charge card is filled out and placed in the space vacated by the file. When a file is

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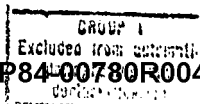


sent to a requester, a classified receipt is filled out and returned to the Files Section. These receipts are placed in a box according to the month of the charge, but it is unclear how valuable these receipts really are in that there is no stipulated time limit on how long a file may be charged out, and follow up activity on files that have been out "too long" is based on the charge outs. The file clerks spot check charge outs as they file material and follow up on those that seem too old. USIA does not have any periodic inventory of their files and their activity runs about 500 charges per week.

- D. The National Security Agency seem to have the tightest controls on personnel files, but they also have the lowest volume. They maintain a current list of persons authorized to charge out personnel files. When one of these individuals wants a file, he fills out a two part charge form. These charge forms are maintained in a bin until the file is returned. When a file is sent to an individual, the second copy of the charge form is sent with the file and is signed off by the recipient and returned to the Files Section where it is matched up with the original charge form. Files that must be forwarded out of the building are sent by their courier system in metal containers and the numbers of the container that holds the file is noted on the charge form. In this manner, if there is a mishap enroute, they can identify which personnel files were missing. They have no stipulated time limit for file charge, but their volume of charge outs runs only about 110 per week.

6. In summary, the Agency system seems to stack up fairly well against those used in other Agencies for controlling the Personnel files. The possible exception of NSA is modified by their very low volume of activity. They handle 110 file charges per week to our 1,727. A receipting system would seem to require a good deal of effort to maintain with very little benefit because our file control problems do not reside in a component's denial of receiving a file, but in its loss within the component's own confines.

7. The points made in the preceding paragraphs would seem to point to a better solution to file control in some sort of computerized file charge delinquent system than any



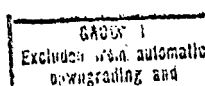
sort of receipting system. A system of this nature which might be feasible under current conditions could be described as follows:

A two part charge out would be prepared when any OPF is charged out. The original copy of the charge-out would be filed in place of the OPF, while the duplicate copy of the chargeout would be used to enter a record in the computer. This could be done either through the Status Section or through direct key punching from the duplicates themselves. When the OPF is returned, the original copy of the charge-out would be pulled and used to remove the charge entry from the computer. A machine listing of outstanding OPF charges could be produced at least monthly and TRB could follow-up on overdue OPF charges to have it either recharged or returned.

8. There are obviously problems inherent in a system such as has been described above. There would be considerable time and effort required for computer input, machine listing production, and the follow-up procedure. An additional problem would be the possible computer input lag which would keep a machine listing from being really current. However, even with these problems, such a system would provide a more timely identification and correction of flagrant abuses of OPF charge regulations.

9. I feel that a computerized OPF control system such as outlined in paragraph seven would be too cumbersome and inefficient to initiate at this time. However, it would be my recommendation that the SIPS Task Force be given the requirement of determining the feasibility of a variation of such an OPF control subsystem under the new Human Resources System. It would seem that under this system, a remote console could be used to create charge cards and input computer data at the same time. The on-line system could be used to provide up-to-the-minute reports available on an immediate basis of overdue OPF charges. Perhaps even an additional edit factor could be added to insure that a customer had a current authorization to charge an OPF, replacing the current hand updated card file.

10. In addition to the comments made above, I feel that the Office of Personnel would be justified in issuing a notice



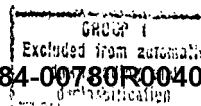
or memo for general Agency consumption, reiterating the requirements concerning OPF charges. Such an issuance could stress the established time limitations as well as the requirements for recharging OPF's when they are transferred.



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Chief, Transactions & Records Branch

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STAT [ ] , Control and Loan of Official Personnel Folders

STAT REFERENCE: [ ] same subject

1. Demands for use of Official Personnel Folders make it imperative for all who control or use the folders to follow carefully the requirements and procedures in the referent Handbook. Only strict discipline in adherence to these procedures can ensure timely availability of the folders for essential use by responsible officials outside the Office of Personnel. Such officials must exercise their individual responsibilities in these control procedures.

2. Further, in order to expedite the movement of Official Personnel Folders within the Headquarters building, they must henceforth be hand-carried by authorized Hq. based officials to and from the Office of Personnel and when they are transferred between such officials. The referent Handbook is being revised to include this requirement. Questions regarding the use and control of Official Personnel Folders should be directed to the Chief, Transactions and Records Branch, Control Division, Office of Personnel, [ ]

3. As the referent indicates, Biographic Profiles should be used in lieu of Official Personnel Folders whenever practicable. Biographic Profiles of staff employees may be obtained by calling the [ ]

[ ] Control Division, Office of Personnel [ ]

John W. Coffey  
Deputy Director  
for Support

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OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 20-

SUBJECT : Control and Loan of Official Personnel Folders

STAT REFERENCES: (a)  same subject  
(b)  same subject

1. Reference (a) directs attention to the importance of adherence to procedures for controlling Official Personnel Folders and establishes the new requirement that they be hand-carried between authorized users in the Headquarters building. All employees in the Office of Personnel are directed to monitor these controls carefully.

2. The Personnel and Support Officers of operating components in the Headquarters area also have a special duty in this regard. They are most often directly responsible for arranging and controlling reviews of OPF's outside the Office of Personnel.

3. There is considerable evidence of inadequate attention to the referent controls. OPF's have frequently been held beyond the stipulated ten day loan period without approval, and have been transferred within and between operating components without such movement being recorded. Inspection shows that materials have been added to and deleted from OPF's by unauthorized persons. Further, increased use of Biographic Profiles in lieu of OPF's could reduce the flow of OPF's which, on the average, were each charged out seven times during FY 1971.

4. The accuracy and ready availability of the OPF for proper use are of primary importance to the Agency and to the individual employees



concerned. I ask each Personnel and Support Officer to give continuous personal attention to the control and use of Official Personnel Folders within his area of responsibility.

Harry B. Fisher  
Director of Personnel